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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-18, and 23-24 without prejudice or disclaimer. Please add new claims 25-38 as presented below.

1-18. (Cancelled)

19. (Original) A method of improving a paved surface comprising the steps of:

applying a layer of liquefied asphalt on a surface;

applying a mat over the liquefied asphalt, the mat comprising a nonwoven mat produced from fibers having a melting point above about 330°F (177°C) selected from the group consisting of mineral fibers, polymer fibers, and mixtures thereof, the liquefied asphalt penetrating and soaking the mat; and

applying a layer of paving material over the mat.

- 20. (Original) A method according to claim 19 wherein the mat has a loadelongation behavior such that when the mat is subject to tensile stress, the mat achieves at least 90% of its ultimate load at an elongation not greater than 5% of the specimen length in the direction of applied stress.
- 21. (Currently Amended) A [[mat]] method according to claim 19 wherein the mat is resistant to shrinkage such that when a 4 ounce (113.4 gram) sample of the mat is held in an oven at 325°F (163°C) for one minute, the area of the mat is reduced to not less than about 90% of its original area.
- 22. (Currently Amended) A [[mat]] method according to claim 19 wherein the fibers have a melting point of at least about 350°F (177°C).

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23-24. (Cancelled)

- 25. (New) The method of claim 19 wherein substantially all the fibers are polymer fibers.
- 26. (New) The method of claim 25 wherein the polymer fibers have a melting point of at least about 330°F (177°C).
- 27. (New) The method of claim 19 wherein the polymer fibers have a melting point of at least about 330°F (177°C).
- 28. (New) The method of claim 19 including the step of adding a nonstick layer on a major surface of the mat after the mat is applied over the liquefied asphalt.
- 29. (New) The method of claim 28, the nonstick layer comprises a polymer layer that melts when hot paving material is applied, the polymer layer having a nonstick coating on its outer surface.
- 30. (New) The method of claim 19, wherein the mat further comprises a rubbery binder.
- 31. (New) The method of claim 19, wherein the mat further comprises natural fibers.
- 32. (New) The method of claim 19, wherein the mat further comprises carbon fibers.

- 33. (New) The method of claim 19, wherein the mat further comprises a binder comprising one of the group consisting of a styrene-butadiene rubber, styrene-butadiene-styrene rubber, acrylic copolymers, methylmethacrylate/butyl acrylate, butylacrylate acrylonitrile, styrene acrylate, vinyl acetate/ethylene, vinyl chloride/ethylene, and other polymers having a glass transition temperature below about 20°C.
- 34. (New) The method of claim 33, wherein the mat fibers comprise 100% mineral fibers.
- 35. (New) The method of claim 19, wherein prior to applying the mat to the asphalt, further comprising the steps of contacting the mat fibers with a meltable material in the form of finely ground particles or fibers, melting the material such that it surrounds the fibers, and then allowing the material to solidify to function as a binder for the mat.
- 36. (New) The method according to claim 35 wherein the material is a thermoplastic polymer.
- 37. (New) The method of claim 19, wherein the mat further comprises a second layer attached to the nonwoven mat, the second layer comprising a woven glass fiber mat or grid.
- 38. (New) The method according to claim 37wherein the second layer comprises a plurality of bundles of continuous glass fibers oriented along an X direction relative to the first layer, and a plurality of bundles of continuous glass fibers oriented along a Y direction relative to the first layer.